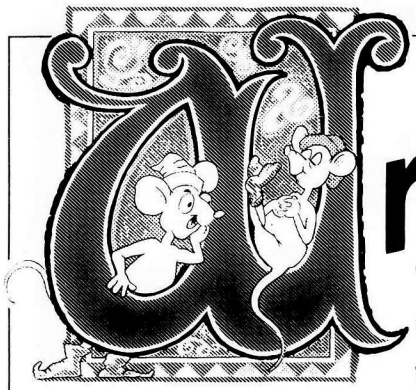
RM User

Volume 6:1
May 1991

The magazine of the RM User Group



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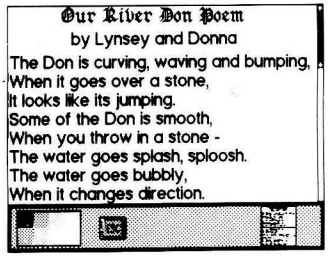
For the beginner . . .


Our River Don Poem
by Lynsey and Donna
The Don is curving, waving and bumping,
When it goes over a stone,
It looks like its jumping.
Some of the Don is smooth,
When you throw in a stone -
The water goes splash, sploosh.
The water goes bubbly,
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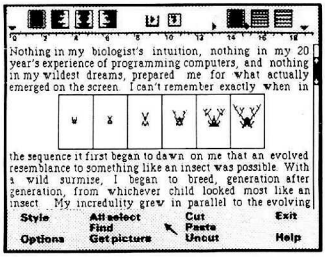
Nothing in my biologist's intuition, nothing in my 20 year's experience of programming computers, and nothing in my wildest dreams, prepared me for what actually emerged on the screen. I can't remember exactly when in
the sequence it first began to dawn on me that an evolved resemblance to something like an insect was possible. With a wild surmise, I began to breed, generation after generation, from whichever child looked most like an insect. My incredulity grew in parallel to the evolving
Style
All select
Cut
Exit
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Paste
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Help Line

The User Group exists to "promote the interchange of information and ideas between users of [RM] microcomputers" to quote from the constitution. There are two main ways in which this can happen. One of these is by using this magazine as a forum in which letters, articles or just short thoughts can be expressed and shared with other members. The other, and the more immediate, is to use the Help Line.

The User Group contains a great body of expertise and the HelpLine exists as a channel for spreading knowledge and especially answers to your problems.

How does this differ from RM Customer Support telephone service? Firstly, you can telephone the User Group members in the evening or at weekends when RM is shut (and, of course, you are just bound to hit problems). Secondly, RM don't claim to have great knowledge of products which they sell but do not produce such as Excel or PageMaker. They can tell you how to install the packages on their equipment and how to get started but they cannot be expected to give in depth support in the use of the packages. We, on the other hand, can. Most of the people whose phone numbers are listed are using the contents of the educational software library and many other packages, on a daily basis. We may well have met exactly your problem.

If you are in difficulty, please feel free to ring anybody on the Committee (telephone numbers are listed on page 42; John and Helen Williams have an answering machine so you can always leave a message there). It is a great help if you are having a problem with doing something using your computer to have the computer next to you when you phone; it may be possible to talk you through a solution over the phone.

If your problem is not urgent, or you think it may be difficult to explain over the phone, then do please write in (to the Editor) with your query. I will either reply directly to you, pass your query on to a better person to solve it or publish your letter in the next magazine as a request for help.

If you have encountered a problem and solved it for yourself then please let us know what you have done. The problem you solved today is very likely to be the problem that someone else will be trying to solve next month.

Finally, you can also telephone Tim Philips on 0284 706233, especially regarding 380z or PC186 problems and Keith Whiddon on 0403 217339, especially regarding Nimbus systems. Both numbers are home numbers and we are grateful to Tim and Keith for allowing their numbers to be published.

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Deadlines for the next issues:

RM User 6:2 ..... 24 May 1991
RM User 6:3 ..... 1 July 1991
RM User 6:4 ..... 20 September 1991
RM User 6:5 ..... 15 November 1991

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News and Editorial

The big news is that RM have finally announced their long awaited notebook computers. There is a range of three machines, imaginatively named the NB100, NB200 and NB300; the first two of these were shown by Colin Watkins at the AGM on 16 March.

The NB100 is the base machine. It has a 10MHz 80C86 processor with 1Mb of memory, CGA graphics, DOS in ROM, one high density 3.5" drive, standard IBM parallel and serial ports, an adaptor to work with a Nimbus 186 monitor and it weighs 3.5lbs, is A4 sized and 1" thick. It is priced at £449 and is available May/June It comes bundled with FlexiWrite and has a claimed battery life of 3 hours (based on disc access of 5 seconds per minute). It has an adjustable standby mode (so you can control the conditions under which it goes into a power saving mode). There is talk of methods of connection to RM's Z Net and Ethernet but no details are yet finalised.

The computer looks good. The display is good for the notebook style machine. Having DOS in ROM means that there is no need to give each user a bootable disc (which saves space on the disc) and FlexiWrite will fit with plenty of space for documents on a high density disc. The disadvantage of the HD disc is that it can't be read on a Nimbus PC 186 so if you have both types of machine you can't easily swap between the two (it can be done, it just isn't easy for mere mortals like me!) The big advantage of the HD disc is that you can fit a lot of stuff on it; it would easily be possible to put a suitable integrated package on the disc and then have a class set of them for use - assuming a suitable license. I'm not sure about the price of the machine - RM are up against stiff competition here - but it does come with the standard three year RM warranty which is better than other manufacturers' one year.

The NB200 has a 12MHz 80C286 with 1Mb of memory. The display is a backlit VGA which looks very sharp. There is a HD floppy as standard and an optional 20Mb hard disc. Memory can be expanded with the addition of 1Mb or 4Mb and it is possible to add a maths co-processor. It has a serial and parallel port as well as ports for a mouse, keyboard, monitor which are compatible with the M-Series machines (and hence with IBM PS/2). It also has a socket for an external floppy drive and a connector to which an AT type bus expansion can connect. It is again A4 sized and is 2" deep. The price ranges from £799 for the NB201 with a single floppy to £1099 for the NB220 with a 20Mb winchester. Windows looks good running on this and the display seemed able to keep up with the mouse pointer fairly well but I didn't have time to really try out much on it.

The winchester size is disappointingly small; 20Mb doesn't really hold that much. I'd like to see a machine with a big enough drive to hold the range of software that might be used in a school so that pupils would only need to keep their own working files on a floppy. I'd also like to see more memory as standard; 2Mb is a minimum for running Windows 3 in standard mode and, as I've said many times before, Windows is definitely "the future"! The addition of RM mode is welcome; it means that much software which has been designed for the Nimbus can still be used.

The final machine is the NB340 with a 386SX processor and a 40Mb drive. This is not yet available but will be priced at £1299 when it is (later this year).

Colin also showed the primary turnkey system. This is a PC186 with 20Mb drive, BBC port, mouse and colour monitor. It boots into Windows 3 and all software is accessed from Windows. It comes with some pre-defined groups; Art and Design, Word Processing, Data Handling and Logo. The first group includes PaintSPA, Art and Time and Windows Paintbrush, the second includes WriteOn! and Write, the next includes Grasshopper, Grass and Cardfile and finally there is RM Logo. There are also some minimised groups which contain the standard Windows 3 accessories, RM Basic and BBC Basic and a set called disc tools which allow discs to be copied, formatted etc. A very nice extra here is the facility to run an application from floppy. If the floppy contains an AUTOEXEC.BAT file then this will be executed, just as if the machine had been booted from the floppy. You might think that this offers no advantage compared to just booting from the floppy but it means that you can simply run commercial software without having to put MSDOS on the disc first. (It's always been easy to take a backup copy of a disc but copying the individual files onto a disc containing the MSDOS system files is another story altogether, especially with a single drive machine or if there are sub-directories on the disc).

All the applications are set up so that they exit back to Windows so that the common interface persists. When you close Windows you don't get a C:\> prompt but instead get a choice of the teacher's menu, returning to Windows or closing down the system. The last simply tells you to switch off and wait 30 seconds before moving the machine (to allow the self-parking Winchester time to stop); return to Windows is obvious (!) and the teacher's menu (once you put in the secret password) gives a choice of system information, running a configuration program, setting the password, running MSDOS, saving or restoring the custom setup, restoring the factory configuration and asking for the date and time at switch on. The ability to custom configure the machine means that the Windows groups can be changed for a different user. At the moment it is only possible to set up one configuration but RM are looking at the possibility of saving multiple configurations.

Net 3.1 was announced. The significant extra in this is the inclusion of Windows 3 (at last!) RM have done a lot of work to improve its performance on the network. It can now be offered in two versions to users; one allows the full use of Windows program manager, the other disables the File Run and File Properties options. This makes it hard for users to lose software or generally get themselves lost. The Windows utilities are also not available (again this is sensible; few users need to access the control panel and if they don't have access to WIN.INI they wouldn't be able to save their changes anyway). The most important changes are not visible but are supposed to improve speed - watch this space to find out how much effect they have!

Net 3.1 also fixes some of the bugs in Net 3 (or were they features?) and will include a new software library for new purchasers. This will include Windows 3 for 186 as well M and X series machines, Excel versions 3 and 2.1c (the latter for PC186 machines), Word for Windows version 1.1, the full version of PageMaker 3.01 (this is the version which will run with Windows 3 and it no longer prints strange messages at the bottom of the page. Version 4 is probably not suitable for use on networks unless you have a lot of money to buy the extra memory it needs and a very big Winchester on which to store it). It will also include Superbase 4; see later for more comments on this. FlexiWrite is a welcome replacement for Oxfordshire Write (this is not to suggest that Oxfordshire Write is not a good product -we still use it on the 480z but FlexiWrite is much better. Flexiwrite is now also available for IBM machines; currently it runs in Nimbus mode on the M Series machines. The new version will run in IBM mode.)

Net 3.1 will be available from May; it is not possible to upgrade to Net 3.1 from Net 2.x - you must upgrade to Net 3.0 and then to Net 3.1. The Educational Software Library upgrade will be available at about the same time and the price has not yet been finalised. It is intended that the ESL will only be upgraded once a year. The problems of software licensing were mentioned. The new library licenses all software for 16 users, as before, but it will be possible to upgrade the license for specific packages. This is very helpful if you have a large number of users who will be wanting to use Word and Excel but fewer than 16 using Superbase and PageMaker because you only have to buy the licenses for the software you are using.

Running this lot obviously needs a server a bit more powerful than the PC186 with a 20Mb drive which many schools used in the past (and some are probably still using). RM now recommend a VX 110 with 4Mb of memory as a minimum server (and this is the lowest configuration that they now sell) but if you can afford it then a 25MHz 486 with 8Mb and either a 110Mb or, better, a 330Mb hard disc is ideal as a server.

If you can either buy this or upgrade to it then it will enable you to run Lan Manager when it is finally launched at BETT in January 1992. Apparently RM are now putting the finishing touches to enhancing their user friendly aspects for Lan Manager. This certainly needs doing - we run Lan Manager on a network from a company which is not RM in our school office and it is not a friendly system!

I'd ordered a 4Mb memory upgrade for my server before I heard these details but it's not yet arrived (I think it is the **only** product which RM don't have in stock!) so I can't tell you what difference having a large cache makes. I'll report on its effect in the next issue.

This magazine will reach you about a week later than I intended and for that I apologise. My excuse this time is that I've been trying to program in Superbase and in Windows BASIC. There are lots of nice features in Superbase which make it easy to handle data and I could even see it replacing Grass for quite young pupils. It's certainly easier to interrogate than DataEase and reasonably fast, even on the network. Its programming language need not concern many users but it is very powerful. I've been trying to write something like an A Level computing project with it and I've no doubt that it could be done but I keep getting frustrated by the editor. One of the joys of working with Windows is that you know exactly how to delete and insert text in any package as soon as you've learned to use one of them. Unfortunately Precision Software decided to go their own way when they developed the editor for Superbase! They also have some strange mouse conventions in the forms designer which I'm sure will make sense eventually. More about Superbase when I've made some more progress.

WinBasic is a much more promising package. If you've ever looked at programs written for Windows then you'll know that the classic *Hello World* program (which simply prints Hello World on the screen) takes up pages of code to open the window, produce a control menu and put up the text. Not so with WinBasic; PRINT "Hello World" is all you need to produce a window with all the appropriate gadgets for resizing it, moving it, minimising and maximising etc. Everything else is equally simple. Drop down menus and dialogue boxes are trivial and it can even drive a PostScript printer (because internally it uses the standard Windows printer routines) It also has a set of routines for interrogating dBASE files and these are easy to use (some of the statisitics on membership were produced with the aid of a program in WinBasic).

Blackwell's, who publish the package, are hoping that it will become a standard teaching package. I think it could but with one or two reservations. It is possible to write programs which don't really take advantage of the Windows multitasking ability but to then move to something which works properly will be hard work. It has named subroutines which can return values but I've found them awkward to use; practice may well make perfect. It's quite slow (but for teaching this may not matter. It's certainly not unusably slow.) Some of its error messages are obscure and I keep getting a warning on one of my programs which I don't understand but in general I like the program. It's certainly the easiest and cheapest (£99) package I've found for Windows programming. This price allows the use on up to 5 stations; currently I have no details of prices for more stations but I assume they are similarly cheap. Contact Blackwell Scientific Publications, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0EL for more details.

I've been sent copies of some excellent software from Scetlander. They are particularly aimed at younger children (pre-school to approximately 12 years old) and cover simple arithmetic (Hooray for Henrietta), spelling (Henrietta's book of spells) and pre-reading skills (Mix and Match). I don't work with children of this age but I let some older pupils try them out. The programs worked reliably (which is a tribute to their robustness) and the people who used them stayed interested in the simple exercises for longer than they would normally use anything on a computer! I will be trying them out with some more appropriately aged children in the next few weeks and I'll let you know how I get on. The programs are designed to run on an IBM PC compatible so they need SETPC on a Nimbus PC (which is provided). One of their strengths is the ease with which a parent or teacher can customise the programs to suit the ability of the individual child. More details are available from Scetlander at 74 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow, G12 9JN Telephone: 041-357 1659.

I've mentioned RM's bulletin board before but for new members the information is worth repeating. David Taylor, who runs it, provides an excellent information service which is free (except for the cost of the phone call). To access it you need a modem together with suitable software (Contact on the PC186 is fine but you cannot download software with it; I use Procomm on a PC286). The number is 0865 796431 and the board is open 24 hours a day (with a short maintenance closure each day).

Finally, the committee would like to record its thanks to Ken Maynard who "retired" from the committee this year after five years' hard work, including this last year when he acted as both Chairman and Secretary. We are grateful to him for all the time he has given us and we hope he will continue to be active within the group.

I.T. in the National Curriculum

Roger Whitfield, Director of ILECC
(summarised by Ken Maynard)

Twelve months ago Roger outlined to the User Group the plans for the future of ILECC. With the demise of ILEA it would no longer be under the umbrella of just one authority but would be maintained jointly by several boroughs on the understanding that it would become self-financing within three years; this has since been cut to two. The first year has gone very well, demonstrating that they must have got things right. Schools really have felt the need for external services and have been willing to pay what is necessary.

The centre has four main functions all of which help to keep ILECC personnel in touch with schools at grassroots level. In-service training continues to take place both at the centre and in the classroom and ILECC has added both technical support and maintenance to its established software development. From this unique viewpoint Roger felt able to speak in broad terms about the National Curriculum IT demands to members who are being subjected to enormous day to day pressures in meeting these demands.

He first reminded everyone that the National Curriculum lays down the *minimum* entitlement for every pupil. It gives the work a key role in schools, which can put a big burden on IT coordinators. He urged them to have the confidence to say what can and what cannot be done and NOT TO ATTEMPT THE IMPOSSIBLE. There is far more being demanded than any one person in an establishment can cope with and much of it should be in the hands of the ordinary classroom teacher.

IT has to be delivered across the curriculum, which means that there are special aspects to be considered. There needs to be coherence, consistency and progression, and these imply monitoring and assessment. It is vital that every establishment has a whole-school development plan and that the role of IT is written into it. The coordinator must not try to preserve a 'computing empire' as a few have done. Everything must be open to all.

Resources are the key to progress. Gone are the days when it was possible in a primary school to wheel a machine from room to room. Every classroom must have at least one machine now. In secondary schools the same is desirable but also a networked room is needed.

Software should be planned. The most effective applications programs have 'other' uses. For example, database management programs must have appropriate sets of data and structured work schemes. The coordinator should seek out such materials with his colleagues and support staff when they use them. ILECC is developing some materials in conjunction with RM based around the network bundle, which should be available in the Autumn. They are also involved with materials to aid staff development.

Assessment is a topic that worries many because it is an unknown quantity; the IT pilot schemes do not start until next September. Assessment of IT concepts by subject teachers is going to be essential and needs sensitive handling by coordinators. They will need to recognise that staff who have actually steeled themselves to use computers within their subject specialisms will still be apprehensive about evaluating the computing proficiency of their students. Thus both subject staff and IT coordinators have to broaden their expertise as the National Curriculum becomes more and more established.

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Chairman's Report to Research Machines User Group AGM 1991

Ken Maynard

At the last AGM there were no nominations for the post of Chairman. I was re-elected as secretary and at the first committee meeting, I was asked also to act as chairman for the year.

Also at last year's AGM the committee was empowered to appoint an editor for the group and then to seek the endorsement of the User Group at this AGM. We unanimously selected Stephen Rochford because he had been involved with desktop publishing for some time and, just as important, understood the requirements of the group. I think you will have been pleased with the quality and timing of the productions. If you have any criticism of the actual material then please send in something yourself or write in with suggestions for future articles.

The committee has met five times in the past year and occupied itself largely with questions of membership, the magazine and the annual conference. Stephen Rochford will deal with the first two items later. I want formally to record the thanks of the committee to Helen Williams for taking over the detailed organisation of last October's conference mid way through the year. She did an excellent job ensuring that all the delegates were properly housed and the equipment was obtained. John Williams ensured that it was all set up as required. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but from all accounts those who did, got from it what they went for.

The cost of three days and nights at The Penguin, Daventree, together with a day's supply cover, was more than many potential delegates could manage. We have decided to do something about the rising cost of our annual conference this year. Helen is leading a small team in the organisation of the conference at a different type of centre. She will be telling you about it later.

Many of you will know that the User Group has a 300MB network server on loan from RM to enable commercial software to be collected and used at meetings. We co-opted Graham Townsend to set it up and he will tell us in a minute about outings it has had during the year and what is booked for the future. It was at the October conference, BETT in January and is here today.

Some of you will know that we operate a mini helpline. We receive a lot of calls over the year and seem to find the answers to the type of questions that are posed. There has been a steep rise in 480Z questions since RM technical support have given up supporting it. They appear simply to pass on the

telephone numbers of committee members. It would be useful if anyone who is familiar with these older but lovable machines would get in touch with someone on the committee with a view to letting their telephone number be published in the magazine.

Lastly, I want to mention a constitutional point that I will raise under any other business. We have come to realise that the editor, who now does everything apart from bind the booklets, needs an expertise that is difficult to come by. We want to enable such a person, and it does apply to Stephen Rochford, to serve the group for longer than the maximum of five consecutive years that is currently the limit.

Constitution

Objectives

The objectives of the group are to promote the interchange of information and ideas between users of microcomputers manufactured by Research Machines plc, to encourage the formation of regional and other specialist groups of users of the above mentioned microcomputers, and to represent the views of users to Research Machines plc. To this end, the elected Executive Committee shall, if possible, be representative of a cross-section of Research Machines users.

Membership

Membership of the Group shall be open to institutions and individuals who are actual or intended users of Research Machines Ltd computers. An annual membership fee will be charged. This fee will be determined at the Annual General Meeting.

Executive

The executive shall consist of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer, membership secretary, librarian, and four other members and shall have powers to co-opt other members as necessary. The editor shall be appointed by the executive and co-opted to the committee. The editor shall receive a remuneration decided at the annual general meeting. Elections shall be held for all posts on the executive at the annual general meeting. With the exception of co-opted members, no member shall serve on the executive for more than five years in any one continuous period of seven years. The position of co-opted members shall be reviewed annually by the executive. The executive may invite Research Machines plc to nominate representatives to attend its meetings.

Activities

The executive will handle the day-to-day business of the Group, and shall be elected at an annual meeting arranged in the spring of each year. The executive will be responsible for arranging such other meetings within the year as it thinks fit, provided that there shall be at least two meetings each year other than the annual meeting.

Publications

The secretary shall be responsible for the publication of a broadsheet from time to time. This shall contain information on the activities of the Group, and such other items as the executive deems fit. The executive may publish such other journals from time to time as it deems fit, the editor having responsibility for the content, production and publication of these.

Changes to the Constitution

Changes to the Constitution shall be agreed by a simple majority vote only at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called by the executive only at the written request of at least twenty members. Proposals to change the constitution must be received in writing by the secretary at least two weeks before an annual or extraordinary general meeting.

Adopted March 12th 1983
Amended 21st March 1985, 16th March 1991

RM User Group Statement of Accounts
16 March 1991

		Income	Expenditure
Balance brought forward (1990-1991)		£5 097.27	
Membership fees		£6 408.00	
RM User	Advertisers	£1 875.00	
	Printer		£3 060.29
	Editor/Articles		£1 375.00
Software		£201.35	
Expenses			£660.49
Bank Interest		£176.34	
BT Mailbox			£93.92
Laser Printer			£1 844.60
Leaflets & Stationery			£867.19
		£8 660.69	**£7 901.49**
Balance carried forward		£5 856.47	

RM User Group Conference Statement of Accounts
October 1990

	Income	Expenditure
Delegates Fees	£9 430.00	
Exhibitors fees	£80.00	
Hotel		£8 132.82
Fees		£223.37
Stationery etc.		£153.42
Secretarial		£100.00
Organisers		£200.00
Travel		£30.00
	£9 510.00	**£8 839.61**
Balance	£670.39	

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Software News

Sheila Maynard

The committee would like to provide more information for members of the User Group about available software. Therefore I am starting the ball rolling here but I do hope that contributions will come in from you.

If you are a user of a piece of software you would like to recommend please send a brief paragraph to me, with the name of the program, the publisher and the price, if you know it. A few words saying what you use it for and why you like it would be helpful. Please do not feel that you are expected to write at any length, an extremely short paragraph will be most acceptable.

If you are a software publisher wishing to publicise software then any package sent in will be reviewed for the magazine.

It is good to see that publishers with real experience of educational software are now taking the RM machines seriously. Also we can take advantage of the increasing production for the IBM PC by using the emulator, of course. I have two leaflets which have arrived on my desk recently, one from Longman Logotron and another from the Cambridge Software House.

Longman Logotron have a strong reputation in the Acorn field, and are now providing material to run with RM LOGO, LogoPlotter to explore graphs and Newton to explore forces. There is a suite of integrated business programs written for the IBM PC. Numerator covers a wide spectrum of mathematical activities and Hyperbook enables indexing and searching of large volumes of text. This is just a selection of available items, for more information contact:

Longman Resources Unit, 62 Hallfield Road, Layerthorpe, York, YO3 7XQ.

Cambridgeshire Software House has packages of interest to the primary age range and many contain supplementary material such as books, audiotapes and photocopiable masters. There are stories and simulations to stimulate reading, writing, database work. A new item is a screendump designed by Barry Newman which enables PC186 users to dump screens to Epson compatible, Integrex Colour and Star LC10 Colour printers.

They are also selling off some discontinued lines, available only while stocks last, there are two which run on Nimbus, Cambridge Writer and Cambridge Database aimed at age 6+ and providing a very simple wordprocessor and a very simple database respectively.

For further details contact
Cambridgeshire Software House, 6 The Quay, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE17 4AR.

Omicron Systems are advertising a catalogue of Windows 3 shareware. Their prices seem reasonable (but remember that shareware authors expect you to pay for their software if you like it; the price you pay companies like Omicron is just to cover their disc copying costs.) Some of the programs are charity ware; a donation is given to charity and one of the best is a screen saver called Screen Peace. This blanks the normal screen and replaces it with a constantly changing display to stop the image being burnt into the phosphor.

For further details contact:
Omicron Systems Ltd., 45 Blenheim Crescent, Essex, SS9 3DT
Telephone 0702 710391

I stress this item must not be taken as a recommendation of any of the software mentioned, I have not seen the packages running. However if you do have any comments please let me know. Now over to you, any useful information out there?

Contact: Sheila Maynard, RMUG Software Librarian, 7 Wood Drive, STEVENAGE, Herts, SG2 8PA.

Nimbus Software Library

Sheila Maynard

I am very pleased to say there is now more software in the library.

Volume 9

Volume 9 contains a working model of Word for Windows.

This is quite a complete version of the program, there are a few limitations as you would expect. It will not print more than 2 pages and it contains only some of the import facilities of the full package, for example, it only imports TIF graphics and will not import files from WORD versions 3-5.

This is a set of 3 discs which are on offer for the price of 2. That is, the set costs £10, with an extra charge of £5 if you do not send three formatted 3.5" discs. Please make cheques payable to RMUG.

Volume 10

RM is now prepared to release some of its Techpacks to User Group members but on condition that we understand there are no facilities at RM for supporting users. We are very welcome to see if any of the material is of use to us but must solve any problems which may arise ourselves. **Please do not ring RM about any problems with this disk.**

TECHPACK4

A series of extensions for RM BASIC:

- provision of user definable characters;
- provision of screen to printer(Epson) copies;
- provision of PEEK/POKE/IN/OUT
- to allow sub-BIOS calls;
- provision of timer interrupts;
- kit for Aztec C Version 3.2. A kit for writing extensions to RM BASIC using Aztec C.
- kit for MASM(version 3). A kit for writing extensions to RM BASIC using MASM.

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WINCACHE

If you are finding reading from and writing to your hard disc in a Nimbus 186 server rather slow, this may be a help. If you have 1.5 Mb of memory 574Kb can be used for disk caching. Note that the program can also be used on a stand-alone machine and disc intensive applications will be speeded up significantly. (A disc intensive application is one which keeps reading overlay or data files from the disc; if the red light keeps flashing then Wincache will probably speed things up for you. It makes dramatic differences to Aldus PageMaker)

AZTEC

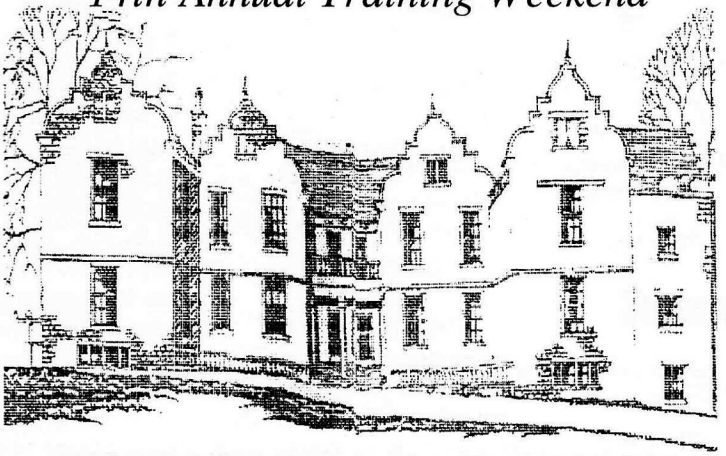
This contains a graphics library for Aztec C and includes documentation on how to build and use the library, sources for building the library, an example of its use and a Sprite editor. The library can also be used with Turbo C wit minimal changes

PASCALTR

This contains a graphics library for Turbo Pascal and includes examples of its use.

Library discs cost £5 each if you send your own disc, otherwise there is a charge of £2.50 per disc if we provide the disc. Further details are available from the software librarian.

RM User Group
14th Annual Training Weekend



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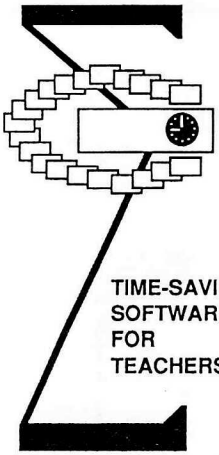

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MELSTAT

Sheila Maynard

MELSTAT is a statistical package which allows you to create, edit, store and retrieve tables of statistical data. A number of statistical procedures can be performed on the raw data. Two types of data can be handled, numeric and category (or text). Each row of the table concerns one 'individual' in the table (or record). Each column contains similar data (as in a field). There are two programs, one allowing only 4-character text columns the other allowing 8.

The program is menu-driven, and choices can be made by typing the initial letter, or by moving a cursor and confirming the choice by pressing Enter.

All the data can be entered at once into a table and then portions used for statistical investigation as required. The selection can be made of just certain row numbers or by the contents of a selected column eg all values greater than a chosen number. Sections of the table can be selected or unselected very smoothly, selected rows and/or columns can also be deleted.

Columns can be moved if you decide you have not arranged the data in the most convenient way and it is also possible to add columns. Columns can be calculated, however it is a bit tedious if a column is to be the total of several others, as only two can be added at the same time, there is a way round it as a column can add a value to itself. It would have been convenient to be able to sum a range of columns.

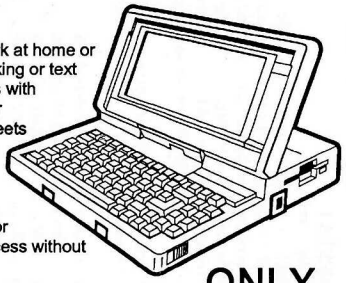
The data can be sorted on a selected column but only in ascending order. I would have liked the option of reversing the order; there are occasions when one wants the highest score at the top as in examination results.

The functions which are available in the package are:
Mean, standard deviation, analysis of variance, Correlation both Product Moment and Spearman's Rank, Cross tab on up to 4 factors, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Kruskai-Wallis, Kurtosis, Mann-Whitney U, Regression, Unrelated/Related 't' value, Scatter diagram, Skewness, Wilcoxon.

If you have a need to analyse data using these procedures I can recommend this package. I found it easy to enter the data, and as any column can contain text it is easy to label the data and produce a very understandable table. The calculations are performed efficiently with no appreciable wait for the results. The results are set out clearly on screen and can be printed. It is not a teaching package but one to be used in practical situations.
For further details contact: Abacus Teaching Systems, Glenthorne, Newton Street, Llanberis, Gwynedd, LL55 4HN.

The Educational NoteBook

ENB200



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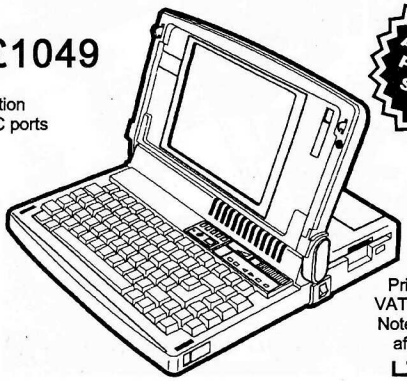

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Hints and Tips

Working with Windows:

If you find that your display seems to be deteriorating (text is replaced by black dots, for example) then you are probably running out of memory. This may be because you have got too many applications open (so close down one or more of them) or it may just be that Windows has got "mixed up". If you are only running one application when this happens then save what you are doing, close down Windows and re-start. The problem only seems to show with Windows 2; Windows 3 seems to have much better memory management.

Margins in Word

The most recent versions of Word on the network have come set up for A4 paper as the default setting. If you normally have 11x8 tractor paper in your printer then this is not suitable. To get rid of this setting, delete the file NORMAL.STY from the directory M:\PUBLIC\WORD (or change its name). This will allow Word to use its own internal defaults which are for normal tractor paper. If you want A4 as default for one user then simply copy this style sheet to their area; Word looks first in the current directory for a style sheet, then in the directory from which it was loaded.

(X)CONMENU

When you type the name of a program and its optional parameters into CONMENU they are converted to lower case. Normally this causes no problems; DOS is not case sensitive for file names and any executable program should check the case of anything passed to it. Unfortunately batch files don't work like this. I wanted a batch file to select either the printer plugged into the printer socket or the low cost parallel port instead of the network printer. This needs USE PRN /D followed by either PRINTER PRN or PRINTER LPT0. It seemed easy enough to edit the batch file LOCAL.BAT so that it checked the first argument and then set up two buttons in a blue menu, one for a parallel printer which ran LOCAL with a command tail LPT0 and the other for a serial printer with a command tail PRN. Unfortunately this didn't work because I was checking for upper case and CONMENU had made it lower case. The following batch file copes with the most likely situations!

```
echo off
rem local.bat
cls
use prn /d > nul
if $%1 ==$LPT0 then goto lpt0
if $%1 ==$lpt0 then goto lpt0
if $%1 ==$PRN then goto prn
if $%1 ==$prn then goto prn
:lpt0
printer  LPT0
echo Printer in parallel port selected
goto exit
:prn
printer PRN
echo Printer in Printer socket selected
:exit
```

This can easily be extended to give COM1 as an optional printer connection if you need to plug a printer into a serial piconet module.

Hiload

This program comes as standard with M Series machines (the PC 286 and PC386) and is very useful on a network machine. The standard IBM machine can only access 640k of memory. On a machine with 1Mb that means that 384k is redundant. Hiload attempts to recover some of this by allowing some programs to be loaded into this area. On a network, for example, most of the software which allows access to the network resources is hiloaded, giving more than 500k available to user programs. It's possible to hiload any (?) memory resident program or device driver. An example of the use of this is with the Microsoft CD Extensions. Normally you type MSCDEX (followed by lots of non-obvious parameters!) and lose some of your precious memory but if you type HILOAD MSCDEX followed by the normal parameters, then the extensions are loaded out of the way and no memory is lost. It's also possible to hiload the Optinet device driver; HILOAD /V NETUSR.SYS tells hiload that the program is a device driver, not an EXE or COM file. The total memory gain from these two is about 10k and is enough to allow some software (e.g. World Atlas CDROM) to work fully.

Do you have any simple tips? I know that some readers will look at the above and think "Oh, I knew that!". There are lots of people who didn't (including me until I found them out) so if you use something which you've either worked out for yourself, dug out of some non-indexed and obscure corner of the manual or just think is useful then please write in and let us all know.

Getting started with PageMaker

Stephen Rochford

PageMaker is essentially a page layout tool; it is ideal for designing forms or booklets with text and diagrams. Although it can be used to create text it is best to type anything long in your normal word processor; Microsoft Word or Windows Write are fine. This is because editing is much faster in these and facilities such as spelling checking or a thesaurus are not available in PageMaker. When your basic text is ready it is time to start PageMaker. When PageMaker starts you are given a fancy title screen and there is a menu bar at the top. Clicking with the left mouse button on any item on the bar will cause a menu to drop down so that you may then choose an option, also by clicking on it. (It is probably worth pointing out some short cuts here. Don't worry if you don't remember them but they will come. Every menu item will have one letter underlined. The short cut to this item is to press ALT and the letter. For example, ALT F invokes the File menu. A further short cut is provided to the right of some entries in the drop down menus. For example, next to New in the file menu there is ^N. This means that pressing CTRL and N is a short cut for new file)

To create a new publication, choose File New from the menu. A *dialogue box* appears; for now just click on OK to accept everything. Later on you may want to change things.

After a short delay the screen will show your working area. It is made up of several parts. At the right and bottom are the *scroll bars*. At the top (below the menu bar) and left are the *rulers*. Near the top right (although it can be moved) is the *tool box*. At the bottom left are the *page icons*. One is probably labelled R; this is the master page and the other is labelled 1 and is black. This is the current page. The rest of the screen is occupied by the *paste board* and in the middle of this is the actual page on which you are going to work . (Your screen may look slightly different if someone has changed the default PageMaker settings but it should be sufficiently similar for you to carry on).

The page is displayed so that you can see the whole of it. Unfortunately, this makes it too small to see anything you may type or draw on it! If you select the Page menu you will see that there are various sizes available. You will normally work at Actual size so choose it now. Experiment with changing size and using the scroll bars until you are confident with them and then make sure that you are looking at the publication with the top left corner of your page near the top left corner of your screen. The edge of the paper is marked by thick black lines and the edge of the printing area is marked by thin blue lines.

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You are now going to put your text onto this page. Choose File pLace from the menu. You will be shown a dialogue box which contains a list of filenames. If the one you want is shown then *double click* on it (double clicking means clicking the left mouse button twice, quickly, with the pointer over the item you want to choose) to load it. If it is not shown then it may be on another disc or in another directory. Click on the directory name (if it is shown) or click on [..] to move *up the directory tree.* When the text has loaded the mouse pointer will change to a shape which represents a block of text. Move the pointer to the corner of the printing area and click the left button. This places your text.

If it is a short piece of text then it will all fit on your page. If it is not then you will need to add more pages - see later on.

You may wish to experiment with editing it now. Choose the *text tool* from the tool box by clicking on the **A** and notice that the pointer changes to an I shape. Move to where you want to work and click to position the *insertion point.* You can now edit in more or less normal fashion. To change the style of any of the text you should highlight it by dragging across it (i.e. move the I cursor to the start of what you want, press the left button and drag out the highlight to the end of the section). From the Type menu choose Type specs. This gives a large dialogue box from which you can choose the font name and size and various other things. Experiment to see what they do; nothing changes on screen until you click on OK.

The tool next to the text tool is the *perpendicular line* tool. It is used for drawing lines at 0°, 45°, 90° etc. The diagonal line tool can draw lines at any angle. Choose the perpendicular line tool and notice that the cursor changes to a cross. Move the cross to the point at which you want to start a line and press the left button. Drag out the line to the length you want and let go. If you get it hopelessly wrong then pressing the DEL key (not backspace) **immediately** will get rid of the line. If it is nearly right but not quite the right size or in the right place then you can change it. Choose the pointer tool (the arrow at the top left of the tool box) and notice that the pointer changes to a black arrow. Move it over your line and click on it to *select* it. *Handles* will appear at each end of the line. (If they do not then try pressing the CTRL key at the same time as you click; if the line is in the middle of the text then clicking could put handles on the text or the line. Control clicking will select each *object* in turn). With handles on the line, click on it near the middle and keep the mouse button pressed. Quite quickly the pointer will change to a four headed arrow and you will be able to move the arrow and line with it. Let go when it reaches the right place. (To make it move only vertically or horizontally press the shift key while you are moving it. The arrow will become two headed and will only move in the direction shown).

To change the length of the line, select it with the pointer tool and then click and drag on one of the handles. Again, pressing shift while moving will constrain the line to stretch in the direction in which it was originally drawn.

To produce more than one copy of the same line, select it with the pointer tool and then choose Edit Copy from the menu. Now choose Edit Paste to put a copy of the line on the screen. PageMaker perversely puts the line where it feels like rather than anywhere convenient! Move it to the place you want. Note that any selected item will have handles on it and can be removed by simply pressing DEL.

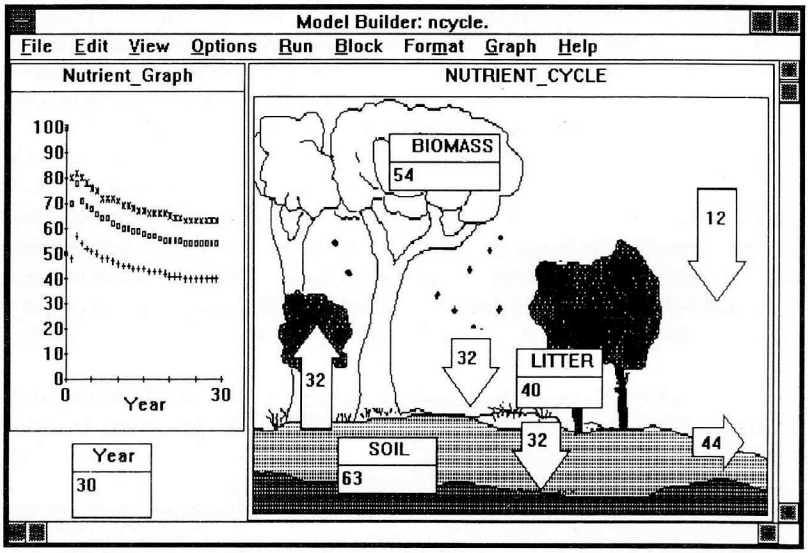
The tool at the bottom right is the *cropping tool*. It is used for adjusting the size of pictures. Leave it alone for now! The remaining three tools are used to draw rectangles, rounded rectangles and ellipses. Pressing shift when any of them are being used gives perfect squares or circles; experiment to get familiar.

Save your work by choosing File Save as from the menu and then follow the instructions in the dialogue box. Print it with File Print; again the dialogue box is complicated so just choose OK.

If, when you have placed your text, you find that it doesn't fit on the page then you can add more pages. Choose Page Insert Pages from the menu and click on OK to accept the suggestions. This will give you a second, empty page (there will now be a page 2 icon in black at the bottomof the screen). Click on the page 1 icon to move back to page 1 and then make sure that you can see the bottom of the text that you placed. Choose the pointer tool and click anywhere in the text. Handles will appear at the edge of the text block and a plus sign (+) will appear in the bottom *window blind*. click on this + and you will pick up the text that did not fit on page 1. Go back to page 2 by clicking on its icon and place your text at the top of page 2. Change to Page Actual Size so that you can read the text and edit it if necessary.

The most important thing to remember when you are starting work with any complicated package (and this includes PageMaker) is that you should not expect to master it all quickly but, provided you don't try to cope with everything all at once, you will be able to produce useful work fairly quickly and once you've got used to using the simple features you'll be surprised how quickly the rest falls into place. Never be afraid to experiment with the menus; you can't harm the computer and the worst you can do is to lose the work currently on your screen but if you save it frequently then even this isn't a major problem - you just re-open the file you last saved.

Model Builder



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To order or for more information, contact:

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Cumana CD ROM drive for Nimbus PC186

Shirley Matthews

Installation Procedure

The CD ROM drive comes complete with a cable which is used to connect the drtive to the SASI/SCSI interface in the PC186 computer.

Machines with an *external* winchester already have a cable which connects the computer to the winchester, and there is no free external socket for the CD ROM drive cable.

An extra identical cable was supplied by Cumana. The original cable which connected the winchester to the computer was discarded and the two Cumana cables used instead. One cable was used to connect the CD ROM drive to the winchester, and the other cable was used to connect the CD ROM drive to the computer.

Inside the Cumana CD ROM drive are six small dip switches or terminators. These are pre-set but can be altered. It was necessary to remove the cover of the drive and to alter the position of the switches after advice from Cumana. This *unterminated* the external Winchester drive 1.

The final position for switches for a PC186 with an external winchester drive was (from left to right) - down down up down down up

IBM Emulator

To use CD ROMs with the PC186 and to be able to install the software, the IBM mode software (SETPC.EXE) must already be copied onto the winchester. SETPC is also necessary to specify colours and to enable a mouse to be used.

The CONFIG.SYS file must be altered to include the CD ROM device driver (CDROM.SYS) and the AUTOEXEC.BAT file must be altered to include the Microsoft CD ROM extensions (MSCDEX.EXE). Both files were supplied on a floppy disc with the CD ROM drive with written instructions.

A subdirectory was created on drive C: called CDROM and the two files were copied into this sub-directory before the alterations were made.

Examples of suitable CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files for a PC186 with an external winchester and an internal silicon disc are as follows:

CONFIG.SYS

```
buffers=20
files=20
lastdrive=z
device=ramdisk.sys
device=c:\cdrom.sys /d:cds432 /c:o /s:e
```

AUTOEXEC.BAT

```
echo off
cls
date
time
path c:\sys;c:\windows;c:\
prompt $p$g
set cddrive=g
c:\cdrom\mscdex /d:cds432
```

Installation of CD ROMs

Each CD ROM must be installed following the instructions in the user guide supplied with the disc; NB most CD ROM instructions assume that the CD drive is drive D. Here it is drive G so you must make sure that your installation is set up properly. e.g. ECCTIS requires the *environment variable* CDDRIVE to be the letter for the drive. This is the purpose of the line SET CDDRIVE=G in AUTOEXEC.BAT.

A menu utility disc was also supplied by Cumana. This includes a main menu file called INTRO.COM. This file may be edited by using the MANAGER.EXE program also supplied on the disc. The menu can be adapted to include details of all the CD ROMs available for use, and each CD ROM can then be run from the menu by using the appropriate command. This will mean that batch files will have to be written for each CD ROM.

The MENU programs - MANAGER.EXE and INTRO.COM were copied to the root directory of C:. A batch file called CDROM.BAT was writtem to run INTRO.COM and load the MENU screen and a Q.BAT file was written to quit the menu and return to DOS.

Batch files were written for each CD ROM. Each batch file contained instructions to load the IBM mode software and to set the appropriate colours for the CD-ROM in use. The Q.BAT file returned to RM PC mode.

Some example batch files

CDROM.BAT

```
echo off
setpc ibm /c=0,9,7,15/p
intro
```

T.BAT

```
echo off
cd \
setpc ibm/c=0,9,14,15
g:
cls
echo      Please wait .....
times
c:
cd \
cdrom
```

Q.BAT

```
echo off
setpc rm
cls
c:
```

Problems

How to connect the Cumana to a PC 186 with an *internal* winchester? Is there an external socket on the computer to take the Cumana cable? It proved impossible to install the Book Bank CD ROM. Is this because Book Bank does not work with a Cumana drive or because of the IBM mode software. It is not always possible to load the Grolier Encyclopedia CD ROM directly from the CD ROM menu using its batch file. It ususally works on the second attempt, however!

It is obviously only second best to a drive connected to a PC286 but I ran it successfully with NERIS, ECCTIS, the Times and Grolier Encyclopedia CD ROMs. It is not possible to see the pictures in Grolier, of course, or to use the Electromap World Atlas CD ROM, as these need VGA graphics, but for schools who cannot afford to upgrade their equipment it does provide a way of using CD ROMs.

More documentation is needed and Cumana say that they are working on this. Given this assurance, I shall definitely recommend the Cumana drive to schools who only have PC 186 machines.

Ms Matthews is Information Technology Librarian at the Nuffield Resource Centre in Hertfordshire. I can agree with what she says about the usefulness of a CD ROM drive with the PC 186. Its worth remembering that any CD ROMs that you buy will be usable when (if!) you upgrade to a PC286. For applications which are text only there is no real advantage to using a VGA machine, however. This is because the computer is not really doing much work, simply searching indices or reading data from the disc and these are both limited by the speed at which the disc gives up its data (and this is slow compared to even a very slow hard disc).

It's perhaps worth mentioning that you don't actually need a hard disc to access a CD ROM. Many (perhaps even most) CD ROMs have their retrieval software on the CD so you can simply have a boot floppy for each CD ROM which contains the necessary batch file.

Finally, the SASI board sold by RM has a space where a socket for an external winchester can be connected. I imagine RM service can fit such a socket for you if you need it; I have a socket fitted to my PC 186 so that I can plug in an external winchester to supplement its internal winchester drive.

Letters to the Editor

I recently received a PC 186 with winchester from RM. It had the BBC style printer port fitted by RM (part 017-587 but now standaard), and the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files set up by RM in such a manner that error messages appeared during booting. The problem is the following line in CONFIG.SYS

```
device=c:\dos\parallel.sys
```

which needs to be

```
device=parallel.sys /1
```

and you need to move the file parallel.sys from the directory C:\DOS to the root, C:\. It is worth putting the statement

```
printer lpt0
```

in your autoexec.bat file. Remember, also that when using the IBM mode software you must start it with the /L=1 switch; e.g.

```
SETPC IBM /C=0,4,15,16 /P /L=1
```

If you install the IBM utility board (part 022-234) then include the line

```
device =c:\dos\clock.sys
```

in your config.sys file and you can then remove the date and time statements from the autoexec.bat file.

(The problem with parallel.sys is two fold; it is possible to have parallel boards set up with different numbers in your computer. The board is supplied set to number 1 and this is the default assumed by parallel.sys but it beeps to tell you that you've left out the /1. The second problem has, I think, been cured with version 1.00K of the file. The problem was that it failed to work unless it was in the root directory of the disc from which it was loaded. If you have recently bought a computer then you may not experience the problem mentioned. If you want the latest version then it can be downloaded from the bulletin board or it is available from RM.)

Borland Pascal 5.5: Excellent. Anyone unaware of Borland's Scholar Support program (which offers all their software at huge discounts to schools, teachers and students) should contact Borland International (UK), 8 Pavilions, Ruscombe Business Park, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 9NN, telephone 0734 320022. Once on their mailing list you will frequently receive offers of good software at discounted prices.

Going back to Pascal - and this may apply to other Borland languages - users must have write access to the *.BGI and *.CHR files. If they do not then the InitGraph routine throws up an error saying that they cannot be found. Does anyone know a way round this? Does it happen on non RM machines?

The problem is not RM specific but seems to be a problem with Pascal. In Pascal if you write a routine to open an untyped file then Pascal tries to open it for reading and writing and I presume Borland use the same internal routine for opening the graphics data files. It's incredibly annoying and I know of no way round it (except for giving all users their own copy of the necessary files). Interestingly, Borland's Quattro uses the same files but does not need write access to them and I'm fairly certain that Turbo C does not have the same problems.

Windows 3 - Borland have just launched a C++ package that includes everything you need to develop programs for Windows. Not for the faint hearted but less expensive than going the Microsoft route and some extra tools are provided to simplify development work.

T K Boyd

See also the News and Editorial section for more on Windows programming.

I am looking for a simple desk top publishing package to run on a 480z network. Front Page Extra is too simple, Caxton or Caxton Press would be suitable but they will not work on a network. NewSPAper is too complicated (and very slow on a large network). Please can anyone make any suggesstions for a program which I can use?

Gil Burton
Colton High School Jeremy Road Wolverhampton WV4 5DG

I don't have any ideas; I can only think of the packages mentioned. If you know of any others then please write and let us know.

FLEXICAD

Sheila Maynard

FlexiCAD is a 2-dimensional drafting program. It is intended to be an introductory package, suitable for primary and secondary use and, in my view succeeds very well in that aim.

The requirements of 2-dimensional drafting by youngsters has been well thought out and the temptation to add 'frills' has been resisted, thank goodness. There are other packages which enable one to paint pictures if that is what is required.

Not only does FlexiCAD have a role in design, but the transformation functions give it a place in Mathematics, linking the mathematical study with a real purpose.

The program is based on the fact that simple designing consists of lines, circles and arcs, the measurements required can either be set by positioning a cursor on the screen or typing them; scaling is also allowed. Measurements are in mm rounded to one decimal place. If drawings are produced on a plotter, the use of vector graphics leads to accurate representations, using the measurements entered. Drawings can also be given a short label.

Operation is by keyboard or mouse, which may be selected every time the program is used or can be pre-configured to select one by default. Both methods work well but I must confess that I found using the keyboard had advantages: line lengths, coordinates and angles can be set by typing in the values, and the cursor is moved very precisely by the cursor keys.

If you use FlexiWRITE the style of management by menus and on-screen help will be familiar; all extremely straightforward.

The printers and plotters which are supported are: Epson-compatible dot matrix, postscript-compatible laser (on Nimbus), HPGL-compatible plotter and Epson Hi-80 plotter.

A grid is available with a 'snap' facility also there is a 'hunt' function which enables automatic connection to the nearest point to the cursor - extremely helpful when trying to make the final connection which 'closes' a shape. The 4 line styles are useful, enabling 'hidden' lines to be shown without confusing the picture.

'Pan' enables the drawing to be moved on screen and 'zoom' makes it possible to look more closely at sections of the design. The drawing can be split into sections which can then be edited independently. Lines, points and circles can be repositioned on screen as can the text. If one line which crosses another is deleted it will leave a break, which is healed extremely efficiently by the 'redraw' facility.

The transformations which are possible are: translation, rotation through any angle, scaling, and reflection in a horizontal or vertical mirror.

The program operates very smoothly with extremely rapid plotting and replotting. I am very impressed with its speed of performance.

There are several versions of FlexiCAD, standalone Nimbus, RM Network and 480Z. The last may help those, like myself, trying to make full use of a 480Z network as well as the newer equipment. It also works well on the PC 286 and 386 machines in RM Mode.

For further details contact
Flexible Software Ltd, PO Box 100, ABINGDON, Oxon, OX13 6PQ

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Membership Information

Stephen Rochford

One of the more interesting aspects of looking after membership is reading the unsolicited comments that some of you put on your renewal forms. I've recently been processing a large number of them (I posted 218 in March) and I've realised that there are a number of mistakes on the form; all minor (perhaps!) so it's time for a redesign. For example, the top of the form has a space for you to tick if you are going to pay £20 but no indication as to why you might want to pay this. My thanks go to the member who pointed out this error. (In case you're worried about getting a bill for a missing £5, we only charge £20 to the members living outside the UK and they just seem to know that they pay the extra; thanks to them for paying up!)

Our membership is still mainly in secondary schools although we have a growing number of primary and middle school members. The commonest computer is still the PC186 but the many schools now only have PC286 computers and I'm sure that this trend will continue. The computers are used for a wide range of activities but with programming becoming less and less important. This reflects the fact that most people are users rather than programmers and I am sure that this is sensible.

I intend to add Windows and Control as categories to the next batch of forms that I print and to split the Art/Graphics area into two parts. I feel that packages like PaintSPA are mainly used for painting pictures whereas Flexicad etc. are used for what might once have been called technical drawing. I know that the split is fairly arbitrary; a package like Corel Draw could probably be used for both. I'd welcome comments from users; are there other areas which I should include and what name should I give the two graphics sections?

Finally, please can I repeat the plea that goes on both the membership form and on invoices; if you do pay by official order then will you please try and make sure that your paying authority quotes your membership number when they send their payment. I frequently get a cheque and payment advice from a local authority with a whole series of reference numbers on it. Unfortunately, these don't match either my reference number or the order number you send to me!

We lose a number of members each year and I don't know why. If you find the group is not what you expected then please let us know; we may be able to help. If you do like some aspects of the group then please let us know this so that we can concentrate more on this area.

Some numbers:

The uses made of computers:

Word processing	283	Art/Graphics	195
Databases	263	Low level languages	113
Spreadsheets	265	Administration	179
High level languages	180	CAL	177
Education	275	CDT	153
DTP	227	Communications	168

Institutions

Sole Trader/ Ltd Co.	11
Primary/ Middle School	14
Secondary School	172
6th Form / FE college	29
Higher Education	15
Independent Schools	41
Computer Centres	27

The other categories have very small numbers in each.

Computers (where 2 numbers are given the second is for network machines)

380z	294	480z	184/1934
Nimbus 186	1165/5579	Nimbus 286	262/582
Nimbus386	99/84	AX	89/691
VX	203	BBC	2304
IBM	311		

(The figure for network AXs includes network VXs; I used not to have a separate code for them! I think (from your comments) that most networked VXs are used as servers).

Members

Having just posted out so many renewal notices the membership is at its annual lowest. We have 393 renewed members; I would expect about another 150 to renew within the next few weeks. Some of our members have been with us since the group started. In the list below if the joining year is shown as 1983 then that person has probably been with us since the start because we did not keep joining dates before this.

Year	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
Number	62	28	26	30	48	40	31	94	34

Writing for the Magazine

I welcome submissions for the magazine from all members. You don't have to be a great writer to submit something; send in a letter or a short tip if you feel that you can't write a full article. Elsewhere in this issue Sheila Maynard has made an appeal for comments on software which you have used and I will gladly publish anything of this nature. Most computer users look at software catalogues and see titles which look interesting but feel that they are being asked to pay quite a lot of money for something which may not do the job. If you have bought a piece of software and found it useful then please share that knowledge with the rest of the Group. Equally, if you have found that a software package did not do what you had hoped then let us know that as well but in this case please explain why the package was not suitable.

I'm still looking for articles on using the educational Software Library; is anyone using Word for Windows as their main word processor? Has anyone customised its menus so that the confusing options are simply not there? How do you introduce spreadsheets to young children? (or even to adults?) It's always interesting to know how you set up your network; have you kept it as shipped by RM or have you given every user their own identity? How do you setup the printer(s) on the network to get the best results?

If you are writing for me then the ideal is to send me a disc produced using Microsoft Word. This magazine is produced using Aldus PageMaker and my style sheet helps me to cope with just about any character formatting so you don't need to wOrry about anything special. If you don't use Word then I can cope with more or less any other word processor that runs on a Nimbus and if you use a 480z then I can take Oxfordshire Write or WordStar files. If what you are sending is short then you can just post a letter to me.

Finally, we pay for published articles at the rate of £5 per printed page (although all payments are at the Editor's discretion).

Advertising in the Magazine

Full and half page advertisements can be placed in the magazine and details can be obtained from the Advertising Manager. We also take classified ads and members may place free ads for surplus equipment in MicroMart.

Rates

Back Cover **£100** Inside Cover **£60** Full Page **£50** Half Page **£30**

Classified **£5 / 100 words**

These rates assume black-on-white, camera ready copy. Please avoid dot-matrix output. Typesetting is charged at cost and is additional to the above rates. Classified ads must be pre-paid; cheques payable to RM User Group.

Membership Form

Please use capitals

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Job title (if appropriate) _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Postcode _____

I enclose a cheque payable to RMUG ☐ order ☐ for £15 (£20 for overseas members) If you are not enclosing a cheque then please send an official order, indicating clearly to whom the invoice should be sent.

In order to serve our members better we like to know something about them and what they do with their computers. The information you give is confidential and we are registered as users under the Data Protection Act.

Please fill in a number next to the computer names below; the first box is for standalone computers; the second, if present, is for networked machines.

☐☐ 480z	☐☐ PC186	☐☐ PC286	☐☐ PC386
☐☐ AX	☐☐ VX	☐☐ NB100	☐☐ NB200
☐☐ NB300	☐☐ BBC/Master	☐☐ Archimedes	☐☐ IBM

Please tick the areas in which you are interested.

☐ Word processing	☐ Spreadsheets	☐ Databases	☐ High Level Langs.
☐ Education	☐ DTP	☐ Art/Graphics	☐ Low Level Langs.
☐ Administration	☐ CAL	☐ CDT	☐ Communications
☐ Windows	☐ Other		

Please tick the best description of yourself or your institution

☐ Sole Trader	☐ Limited Co.	☐ Primary School	☐ Charity
☐ Middle School	☐ Secondary Sch	☐ 6th Form College	☐ FE College
☐ HE College	☐ Polytechnic	☐ University	☐ R&D
☐ Personal User	☐ Computer Centre	☐ Independent School	☐ Other

Please send your form to: **Stephen Rochford, RMUG Membership Secretary, George Stephenson Community High School, Southgate, Killingworth, NE12 0SA**

You may photocopy this form if you do not wish to cut your magazine.

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